



Consumer Education Website Continuous Improvement Series Spotlight on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Content



Responding to Disasters and Emergencies: Helpful Child Care Information to Share

During a disaster or emergency that has a widespread impact, it is critical to regularly communicate with families and providers to give them state- or territory-specific information about child care in ways that are easy to access and understand. This tip sheet provides resource topics and frequently asked questions (FAQs) that state and territory Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Administrators may consider when developing content, resources, and communication strategies that address disasters and emergencies to post on their consumer education website.

For more guidance on writing and formatting your emergency-related content and helping families find your website, see the Child Care State Capacity Building Center's [Leveraging Child Care Consumer Education Websites During Emergencies and Disasters: Tips and Best Practices](#).

General Considerations

A jurisdiction's CCDF-funded child care consumer education website should be the trusted source of up-to-date child care information. This is particularly crucial during any emergency or disaster, when stakeholders may be in urgent need of accurate, time-sensitive information.

By providing well organized state- or territory-specific emergency information about child care on your consumer education website that is both easy to find and understand, you can help stakeholders better navigate times of uncertainty.

Here are some ways to share urgent child care information on your jurisdiction's consumer education website:

- Provide links to your jurisdiction's disaster or emergency hub, or health department website, for all other guidance.
- Links to national or federal recommendations may be helpful to include for universal guidance relating to disasters or emergencies, but remember that families and providers are coming to your website for information on how this emergency is specifically affecting local child care programs and their access to them.
- Consider a feature that allows families or providers to receive regular email or text updates on how the disaster or emergency is affecting child care. Ensure that this feature includes only critical updates that are specific to child care.

SCBC's Spotlight on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Content Suite Resources

- [Leveraging Your Child Care Consumer Education Website During Emergencies and Disasters: An Assessment Tool](#)
- [Responding to Disasters and Emergencies: Helpful Child Care Information to Share](#)
- [Recovering from Emergencies and Disasters: Helpful Child Care Information to Share](#)
- [Considerations for Emergency Child Care: Information and Tips for Families and Providers](#)
- [Leveraging Child Care Consumer Education Websites During Emergencies and Disasters: Tips and Best Practices](#)



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Communicating With Families

Families need to be able to make informed decisions about child care during an emergency or disaster. Although sharing national resources is helpful, be sure to include state- or territory-specific resources and information. Collaborate with partners to ensure you are sharing links to one another's websites to help route families and providers to the most current and accurate child care information.

This section shares some suggested resources and sample FAQs that you may want to consider posting on your consumer education website.

Recommended Resources for Families

- Consider how to refine your child care search tool to indicate which child care providers are still operating during the emergency or may be approved to provide emergency care. If this is not immediately feasible, post a list of open providers or those approved to provide emergency care directly on your website, if applicable.
- Share recommendations for choosing quality care during emergency or disaster situations.
- Offer age-appropriate early learning resources for families to use at home with their children.
- Provide tools and resources for talking to children about the disaster or emergency.
- Provide tools and resources for managing the mental and physical health needs of children and families.

FAQs for Families

Status of Program Operations and Finding Care

- How do I know if my child care center is open or closed?
- Why was my child care program closed?
- Are school-age child care services available if schools are closed?
- I am an essential or emergency worker; what are my child care options, and how can I find care?
- Is there a difference between emergency child care facilities and licensed child care?

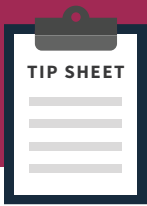
Safety and Precautions

If an emergency is public health-related, consider the following questions:

- For providers who are permitted to remain open, what precautions are they taking to limit illness exposure in their facility?
- How do I know if a confirmed case of an illness has occurred in my child's facility?

Payment and Subsidies

- How does the emergency or disaster affect my child care subsidy or child care vouchers?
- How do I apply for child care subsidy?
- Have eligibility requirements changed?
- My child receives a subsidy for child care, and my child care facility is closed. What can I do to continue to receive my subsidy once child care reopens?



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- My child receives a subsidy for child care, and my child care facility is open for only emergency or essential workers. I am not an emergency or essential worker. Can I maintain my subsidy eligibility during this time?
- My child receives a subsidy for child care, and my provider is still open. However, I have made the decision to keep my child home with me. How can I maintain my subsidy eligibility during this time?
- Do I continue to pay my child care provider if their facility is closed?
- Will I be charged for using an emergency child care program if I am an emergency or essential worker?
- To maintain my subsidy, do I need to report that my hours have been reduced, my place of work has been shut down, or that I am working remotely?
- My employer requires that I work from home. Am I required to keep my children at home with me, or can I take them to child care?
- I am unable to pay my parent fee to my child care provider. What should I do?
- I lost my job, or my hours have been reduced due to the disaster or emergency. Will I lose my subsidy?

Communicating With Providers

Providers need to have up-to-date information to respond to policy changes and emergency orders in a timely manner. Ensure that the information you share is organized and clear. Consider how you can facilitate communication between providers and licensing or subsidy staff during this time.

This section shares some suggested resources and sample FAQs that you may want to consider posting on your consumer education website.

Recommended Resources for Providers

- If the emergency is public health-related, share recommendations for health screening and prevention, if applicable.
- If the emergency is public health related, share procedures for communicating confirmed cases of illnesses, if applicable.
- Include recommendations for communicating information about closures, policy changes, and eligibility requirements to families.
- Share tools and resources for talking to children about disasters and emergencies.
- Share tools and resources for supporting child care providers, including a list of mental health resources.
- Distribute informational flyers and signage that providers can use to communicate and reinforce proper health and safety practices related to the disaster or emergency, if applicable.

FAQs for Providers

Policy Changes

- How have subsidy, licensing, and monitoring policies changed in response to the disaster or emergency?
- Have the number of allowable absence days increased for children receiving CCDF subsidies?
- Will providers be allowed to charge the state based on enrollment, rather than attendance, during this time, if applicable?
- Will emergency or essential workers be eligible for CCDF subsidies?
- How will providers be able to renew their child care license if it is due to expire during this time?
- How will monitoring visits be handled during this time?
- What rules or guidance does the state have about temporary or emergency child care, if applicable?



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Payment and Subsidy

- Are there any state reimbursements through the subsidy program for financial losses during this period?
- Are there any grants, loans, or other supports available to child care providers?
- Will providers continue to receive subsidy payments if their center is required to close?
- Can private payment programs continue to charge enrollment fees during this closure, if applicable?
- I need to close my facility for additional cleaning; will I be paid for the days my facility is closed?
- If parents cannot work, or they are not using child care, how will I collect the parent fee?

Operations

- If I am open to serve children of emergency and essential staff, am I also permitted to serve children of nonessential staff?
- Can I expand services to school-age children, children receiving subsidy payments, or children of essential staff during this time?
- Can in-home or family, friend, and neighbor providers continue to provide care if licensed centers are closed?
- What guidance does the state have for providers who are operating with limited staff?

Safety and Prevention

If the emergency is public health-related, consider the following questions:

- Are there resources available to help me apply new health and safety guidance effectively, such as social distancing?
- Can providers restrict parents from entering the center or require drop off and pick up at the door only?
- What should I do if my facility experiences a possible instance of exposure related to a public health emergency, such as coronavirus disease 2019?

Other

- How will children who receive meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (or another food program) receive food?
- How do I donate supplies to an emergency child care program?

Do You Have Questions?

If you have questions about whether your planned website enhancements meet Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) requirements, please consult with your [Office of Child Care regional office](#) for guidance.

If you would like technical assistance on developing and enhancing your consumer education website, contact the Child Care State Capacity Building Center (CapacityBuildingCenter@ecetta.info).

The State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) works with state and territory leaders and their partners to create innovative early childhood systems and programs that improve results for children and families. The SCBC is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care.



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